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*The Authority of the CHURCH*  
*in Controversies of FAITH.*

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Set forth in a

695.9.7.  
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S E R M O N

Preach'd before

The Right HONOURABLE the

Lord M A Y O R

A N D

Court of ALDERMEN,

A T T H E

Cathedral-Church of St. P A U L ;

O N

SUNDAY the 2<sup>d</sup> of September, 1716.

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By WILLIAM BAKER, B. D.

Fellow of St. John's College in Cambridge.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for ROBERT KNAPLOCK, at the

Bishop's Head in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1716.

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The Authority of the Court of  
the University of Cambridge

Set forth in a

VERBAL

Proclamation

The Right Honorable

THE LORDS

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COUNCIL

of the

UNIVERSITY

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HENRY RAINES, *Esq*; L.L.D.  
and CHANCELLOR of the Diocese  
of Litchfield and Coventry.

SIR,

**H**AD I been wholly left to my own Liberty,  
and the Guidance and Direction of my  
private Judgment, without that Deference and  
Regard which are always due, and which I am  
bound to pay to the Commands of my Superiours;  
no Discourse or Performance of mine would ever  
have been expos'd to publick View.

INDEED the Opportunity it affords me of  
making my Acknowledgments for the many Fa-  
vours I formerly received, and the great Assist-  
ance I had in my University-Education by the  
Bounty and Liberality of You and Your good  
Family, is what I am particularly pleas'd with,  
and do with the sincerest Gratitude return my  
most publick and hearty Thanks for.



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## *The DEDICATION.*

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I DON'T know how I should be excus'd for prefixing Your Name, without Your Leave, were it not for the high Esteem You have always profess'd for our Excellent CHURCH and Constitution; which is Reason sufficient for me to believe, That no Attempt that may contribute to the Security and Establishment of Her just Power and Authority, will ever meet with Discouragement from You; especially at a Time when the Age abounds with Libertines and Free-Thinkers of all Sorts, who would rob Her of Her Peace, and divest Her of Her undoubted Privileges and Rights.

THAT You may long continue a Blessing to Your Family, and an Ornament to Your Profession; That You may always be a shining Example of Vertue here, and receive a glorious Reward for it hereafter, shall be the constant Prayer of,

SIR,

Your most Obedient, and

most humble Servant,

*William Baker.*





ACTS I. viii. former part.

*But ye shall receive Power;  
after that the Holy Ghost  
is come upon you.*



THESE are the Words of our blessed SAVIOUR to his Apostles, just when He was taking his final Leave of 'em at *Jerusalem*, whence He had commanded them, that they should not depart; but *wait for the Promise of the FATHER*. He had made it his Business during his Abode and Continuance upon Earth, to separate to Himself a *Disciplehood* or *Church*, constituting them an Incorporation or Body Politick, with Rights and Privileges, Laws and Governours of their own, apart from the State, or any worldly Incorporation. It only remain'd,  
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That

Acts iv.  
17.

That now upon His leaving them, some Care might be taken to preserve and perpetuate that Society or Church which He had instituted by his own Authority; and that as it receiv'd not its Being from the Secular Powers, so it might not be liable to be invaded by them. This He did by investing them with the Power mention'd in my Text, to do the Work of the Ministry in their several Capacities, and to exercise that Jurisdiction, and Authority, which He had given them, notwithstanding the Secular Powers should restrain and forbid them to speak at all, or to teach in His Name, as they had *Peter* and *John* before. Indeed, the stating of the Case about the proper Subject of CHURCH Power, and the Extent of it, whether Dependent or Independent on the State, is an Affair so very difficult and perplex'd, that for a thousand Years last past, there is no one Controversy that has given more Disturbance both to Church and State. From *Constantine's* Entrance on the Imperial Throne, for full eight hundred Years together, there was an happy Concurrence of both Ecclesiastical and Civil Powers, Θεοτέτρα καὶ ἀνθρώπινα συνδεδυμένα, as the 42d *Novel* expresses it; till Pope *Hildebrand*, about the latter End of the XIth Century, usurp'd not only the Spiritual, but the Secular



cular Sword, to the manifest Injury both of the Bishops and the Emperor; the former having an equal Right of Jurisdiction with himself, and the latter till then, being without a Competitor, so far as related to any just Claim upon his temporal Authority. What happen'd here in *England* upon the Reformation of our Church, under the Reign of K. Henry VIII, when the Supremacy was translated, and an Abdication made of the Papal Power, Few of this Nation want to be inform'd: But the Matter was never so much controverted as at, and since, the Revolution, upon what Occasion every Body knows, that is not wholly ignorant of the particular Transactions of that Time. Nor will the Case appear, should we descend to the present Time, to be much alter'd for the better, if we consider our *Erastians* on the one Hand, and our *Modern Hereticks* on the other: The former allowing us no Manner of Authority, but what we are oblig'd to the *Civil Magistrate* for; and the latter accusing us, as depriving Men of their *private Judgment*, and denying them the Privilege of Thinking and Judging for themselves, and that too in Matters of the nearest Concernment to their eternal Welfare.

Now, to remove the Prejudices which unreasonable Men may have conceiv'd against



our CHURCH and CLERGY upon this Account.

I SHALL beg Leave in the first Place,

I. To enquire into the Nature of that *Authority* which our CHURCH maintains, and how necessary it is to the very Being and Subsistence of it.

II. I WILL shew, That the Authority of the CHURCH deprives no Man of his Right of *private Judgment*, or of the Privilege of Thinking and Judging for himself. And,

III. THAT it is not destructive of, but very consistent with the Authority of the *Secular Magistrate*. And,

I. To explain the Nature of the *Authority* of the CHURCH; It is not necessary to consider Her in Her internal and invisible State, as She is subject to CHRIST alone, Her Supream Head and Governour, She being, as such, absolutely exempted from all earthly Power and Dominion of Men, and so incapable of admitting any other. Nor need we consider Her with relation to that  
extraor-

extraordinary *Power* and *Authority* which the Prophets and Apostles were possess'd of, and which, during their residence upon Earth, was peculiar to them alone, and not communicated to any other. It being sufficient to the Matter in Hand to consider Her in Her external and visible State, endued with that ordinary and common Power, which is inherent in, and inseperable from Her, which She originally deriv'd from CHRIST Himself, and which, in Conformity to his Will, the Governours of the CHURCH have always exercis'd in the Management and Regulation of the Affairs of it. The Authority therefore which we of the Church of *England* ascribe to Her, is, as Her XXth Article expresses it, "A Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and Authority in Controversies of FAITH." And as another Article further adds, "A Power of cutting Men off from the Unity of the CHURCH, and after Reconciliation made, of restoring them to it again." And,

I. WERE there no other Proof of the CHURCH's Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, than that single Precept, That *all Things be done decently and in Order*; no mention being made at the same Time, what



those particular Things are which would best conduce to the Preservation of 'em, that alone, One would think, might be judg'd sufficient: And if some Rites and Ceremonies are absolutely necessary to Order and Decency, it is not to be conceiv'd, how that Order and Decency are to be preserved, unless a Power were lodg'd in the Governors of the CHURCH of prescribing and enacting such Ceremonies and Rites, as They in their Judgments shall determine to be most proper and conducive to that End; especially, if it be consider'd, That without some Ceremonies and Rites, the publick Worship of GOD cannot possibly be perform'd, which is so essential to the very Being of a visible CHURCH, that when that ceases, so must the Church too; the regular and orderly Worship of GOD, being the very Thing that constitutes and makes Her what She is. But,

2. THE Authority of the CHURCH in Controversies of FAITH, is what Her greatest Adversaries would fain deprive Her of. An Authority, as they pretend, not only absurd in itself, and disclaim'd by our Disfenters of all Denominations, but really Nothing better than a popish Usurpation, and procur'd by the Fraud and Forgery of Her



Her Priests. Whereas, the Authority which our CHURCH maintains, is so essentially and fundamentally inherent in Her, as appears from abundant Testimony from Reason and Scripture, as well as from the constant Practice of all National Churches, and particular Sects in every Age, and all Places of the World; that were She but once divested of it, She could be no longer a Church without it. For as sure as it is that Doubts and Controversies about religious Matters have, and may arise in ours, as well as in other Churches, by the Resolution of which Doubts, the Peace and Unity of the CHURCH is preserv'd: So it undeniably follows, That somewhere or other there must be a Power of finally determining about the Truth or Falseness of 'em. Now, the only Rule of FAITH, the supreme Judge in all Controversies, the original Test, the Standard which We of the CHURCH of *England* bring all our Doctrines to, is the WORD of GOD, the Holy SCRIPTURES, against which the CHURCH Herself has no Authority to determine any Thing: And We solemnly promise at our Ordination, to teach Nothing (as requir'd of Necessity to eternal Salvation) but what we are persuaded may be concluded and proved by SCRIPTURE.

Now

Now, herein lies the main Stress and Difficulty of the Case, How that should be the Rule to decide Controversies by, which in such Disputes is always pleaded on both Sides? And how the SCRIPTURE should be the Judge in Controversies of FAITH, when Nothing can be reputed a Controversy of FAITH, any further than upon Account of the Plea and Foundation it has from thence for being so? Allowing therefore, that in every such Controversy it may be doubted, on which Side the Scripture seemes most to incline; Is it not necessary that a Power of Determining should be somewhere to be found? And where so properly as in the Governors of the CHURCH, who are styl'd, *the Ministers of his Word, and Stewards of his Mysteries*, whose peculiar Business and Employment it has always been from their Youth up until now, to search and study the Holy SCRIPTURES; and consequently, may reasonably be suppos'd to be best qualify'd to be intrusted with it. 'Twas with them that *Form of sound Words*, 2 Tim. i. 13. was deposited, as the proper Persons to direct us about any Doubts or Scruples that may arise concerning the Truth of any Doctrine: And accordingly the Apostle directed the Hebrews, *to follow the Faith of those that had the Rule over them*; not to be carried about with divers and

Heb. xiii.  
7, 9, 17.

*strange*



*strange Doctrines*; but to *obey them that had the Rule over them, and submit themselves*; for they *watch for your Souls, as those that must give an Account, that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief.* And when our blessed SAVIOUR, by Virtue of that absolute Power that was given to Him by his FATHER, sent His Disciples, as His FATHER had sent Him, He commanded them, to *Go and teach all Nations*, i. e. furnish'd them with Power and Authority sufficient to make Disciples of them; and not only so, but promis'd to be with them *always, even to the End of the World*, i. e. to perpetuate the same to them, and their Successors for ever after 'em. And that the Governors of the CHURCH always had, and exercis'd this Power and Authority, Her constant Practice, the best Interpreter of Her Right, from Her Infancy down to the present Time, does abundantly evince; there being no one Church, or Sect whatsoever, since the first Foundation of the Christian Religion, as were easy to shew, if there were Occasion, but what in their Councils, and by their Decrees and Canons have claim'd and exercis'd it; all the Difference among the Reformed Churches being only some less essential Points of Faith, and some particular Ceremonies and Rites of Worship, enacted by Virtue of that same Power and Authority which we are contending for,

Matth.  
xxviii. 18.

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and which our *Church* asserts in Her XXXIV<sup>th</sup> Article, " Every Particular or National Church is invested with, to ordain, change, and abolish Ceremonies and Rites, ordained only by Man's Authority; so that all Things be done to edifying. But,

3. As no Body-Corporate whether Ecclesiastical or Civil can possibly subsist, be its Laws and Constitutions ever so good, without a Power of Animadverting upon the Transgressors of them, so CHRIST, who cannot be suppos'd to have been wanting to his Church in any Thing necessary to Her Preservation and Defence, hath, upon every notorious Scandal or Offence given, committed a Power to his Ministers and Vicegerents of cutting Men off, and excluding them from the Unity and Communion of the CHURCH; a Power in itself purely Spiritual and Ecclesiastical, given Us for Edification, and not for your Destruction; and tho' attended indeed with some temporal Disabilities, as a proper Enforcement of spiritual Censure; yet this being entirely owing to the Secular Powers, who have indulg'd us the Privilege, as expedient and necessary, they can be no reasonable Objection against it. For tho', in some Cases, our Ecclesiastical Superiours have an external, co-ercive Power, piously granted

2 Cor. x. 8.

ed by the Favour of our Princes, and Wisdom of our Law-givers, as a Restraint upon those, who would be otherwise regardless of purely Spiritual, and Ecclesiastical Censures; yet since they do not claim it as essential to their Office, or originally inherent in, and inseparable from it, this can be no just Matter of Complaint, nor charg'd upon them as aspiring to be Lords over God's Heritage, or arrogating to themselves any external or temporal Power, either directly or indirectly, so as to force Men to Obedience, whether they will or no. All the Power they claim hath Nothing to do with the Bodies or Estates, but only with the Minds and Consciences of Men, and that too not by Way of absolute Sovereignty and Dominion over them. Which brings me to the second Thing propos'd, which was to shew,

2. THAT the Authority of the CHURCH deprives no Man of his Right of *private Jndgment*, or of the Privilege of Thinking and Judging for himself. It may commonly be observ'd of perverse and ill-designing Men, That the better to accomplish any wicked Purpose they may have in View, they are apt to jumble and confound one Thing with another, and so they can but deceive Mens



Understandings, and impose upon their Judgments, they are not very solicitous whether the Method they take be justifiable, or not. Thus in the Case of the *Authority of the Church*, One would be apt to think, by the Misrepresentations that are given of it, that there was Something in it very heinous and detestable, that the Clergy of the Church of *England* were a proud and persecuting Sett of Men, whom Nothing would satisfy but an implicate Faith, and blind Obedience to all their Doctrines and Determinations, without allowing so much as to examine into the Truth and Reasonableness of them; that they arrogated a Power of Framing and Ordaining new Articles of Faith, and of Determining what was necessary to be believed and practis'd in Order to Salvation, by their own Authority: In short, That the main Thing they aim'd at, was to be supream and absolute over Mens Faith and Manners. Whereas this is all owing to the Fraud and Malice of the Enemies and Adversaries of our CHURCH and CLERGY, who the more effectually to deprive Her of Her *Power and Authority in Controversies of Faith*, make *Authority and Infallibility* the same Thing; and so under Pretence of vindicating the CHURCH from the Scandal of the former, load Her with all the Infamy and Absurdities of the latter;



latter; arraigning Her Authority as a popish Usurpation, and Her Priests and Clergy, as Papists in Disguise! And was there ever any Body or Order of Men so injuriously treated as We are? Good God! that the most truly Primitive and Pure CHURCH upon Earth, should, with Impunity to its Adversaries, be liable to such repeated Insults and Affronts! It is very well known, that the CHURCH of *England* maintains no such Doctrine, nor challenges to Herself any *Power* or *Authority*, but what is very consistent with Her acknowledg'd Fallibility. So far are We from assuming to Ourselves, what is peculiar to GOD and His CHRIST, that we know of no infallible Law-giver upon Earth; One is our Lord and Master, even CHRIST, who is in Heaven, He is the only Supream and Infallible Judge of Controversies; and to Him, and Him only, is an absolute Submission of all our Judgments and Understandings due: So far are We from claiming any absolute, or unconditional Obedience from the Members of our Communion in Things relating to their Faith and Manners, under Pretence of being free from Error and Mistake, that we neither know, nor pretend to any Promise made to our CHURCH, of Her being secur'd from Error; but that She hath, and may err in Things pertaining unto GOD, and that therefore  
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Things ordain'd even by General Councils as necessary to Salvation, have neither Strength nor Authority, unless it may be declar'd that they be taken out of the Holy SCRIPTURE: So far from forbidding them the Use of Holy SCRIPTURE, and so debarring them of the Means of Examining our Doctrines, by teaching them to resolve their Faith into the *Authority of the Church*, that these are some of those very Errors and Corruptions, which we condemn the Church of *Rome* for; We teach not for Doctrines, these and such-like Inventions, and Commandments of Men; but require it as a Duty incumbent upon all, to study and search the Holy SCRIPTURES, as containing all Things necessary to Salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be prov'd thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation. These are the express Words of Her VIth Article, and in that very Article where the *Authority of the Church in Controversies of Faith*, is asserted by Her, it is immediately subjoyn'd, That " It is not lawful for the " Church to ordain any Thing that is contrary to GOD's Word written, neither " may it so expound any Place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. " Wherefore



“ Wherefore, altho’ the Church be a Witness and Keeper of Holy Writ; yet as it ought not to decree any Thing against the same; so besides the same, ought it not to enforce any Thing to be believ’d for Necessity of Salvation. ”

BUT to come closer to the Thing in Hand. As we do not debar the Members of our Communion the Use of Holy SCRIPTURES, So neither do we so determine the Sense of it, as to preclude any one the Use of his own Understanding; every Member of our CHURCH is left to his own Liberty to think and judge for himself as he pleases; all we require and insist upon is, that they be quiet and contented within their own Spheres, and not suffer’d to impose their *private Opinions* and *Judgments* upon others: *Hast thou*

*Faith*, saith the Apostle, *have it to thy self before GOD.* If Men will but be modest and silent in the private Enjoyment of their own Sentiments, without acting the Dictators and Prescribing to their Superiours, they may be happy and compos’d within themselves, and in no Danger of Disturbance from others; But if they will needs be troublesome and discontented, unless they may take upon ’em to be wiser than their Superiours, and advance what Doctrines and Controversies they please, and indeed set their *private Opinions* in Opposition

Rom. xiv.  
22.

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sition to the establish'd Determinations of the whole CHURCH; She must be extreamly wanting to Her own Preservation, if, in such Cases, She do not severely animadvert upon the Disturbers of Her Peace and Constitution. For as in every well-constituted Government in the World, where there are Laws and Ordinances to be govern'd by, in Case of any Controversy arising about the Sense or Meaning of them, it is always the Business of the Magistrates and Judges to Interpret and Explain them; so in every Particular or National CHURCH, there must be such a *Power* in the Governors of it to fix and determine the Sense and Meaning of their own Laws, and that authoritatively too, without any more regard to *Mens private Opinions* and Sentiments to the contrary, than after due examination of the Truth or Falshood of 'em, to punish the Offenders, if they continue obstinate, and not content with the Indulgence granted them of living quietly and peaceably in the modest Enjoyment of their own Thoughts, without giving Offence or Provocation to their Superiours and Governors, who are appointed over them for this very End and Purpose. If after Sentence given, they cannot with Safety to their Minds and Consciences conform their Judgments to the Determinations that are made, yet sure they



they are under no Necessity of giving Disturbance to the CHURCH, they cannot conform to; they ought in their private Capacities at least to allow the same Privilege to the CHURCH in general, that they require and contend for to themselves in particular, *Viz.* of being unmolested where Judgment and Conscience are concern'd; and if they can't prevail upon their Understandings to pay an inward Assent and Obedience to the Dictates of their Superiours, yet in good Manners, they ought to be outwardly modest and submissive in their Behaviour; not petulant and noisy, not clamorous and provoking, least in justice to the CHURCH, and that indisputable *Authority*, which CHRIST its Head, has given to Her, She be absolutely oblig'd to proceed against them, and pronounce and condemn them as Hereticks and Unbelievers. And this the Governors of the CHURCH must do, not as having Dominion over Mens Faith, or enjoyning them to believe just how much, and in what Manner, they please, with an implicate Submission of their Judgments and Consciences: but out of absolute Necessity, and a just Regard to the Peace and good Government of that Holy CHURCH of which CHRIST hath made them *Over-seers*, it being impossible that the Church can otherwise subsist, or that there could be

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so much as the Face or Appearance of a *Church* left, where there is not this *Authority*, as Occasion offers, to vindicate and preserve it. But,

3. It remains in the third and last Place, that I shew, That the *Authority* of the *Church* in *Controversies of Faith*, is not destructive of, but very consistent with the *Authority* of the *Secular Magistrate*. 'Tis true, indeed, the *Roman Catholicks* will needs claim an Exemption to their Clergy from all Civil and Secular Power whatsoever, not in Ecclesiastical Matters only, but even in Civil and Criminal, not allowing them to be subject to the Laws of any Secular Government, and so out of the Reach of their Censure and Authority. But why must the *Church* and Clergy of *England*, the main Bulwark against *Popery*, be charg'd with all the Encroachments and Absurdities of it? Why must we of the *Church* of *England*, be censur'd and condemn'd for those Doctrines and Practices which are peculiar to the *Church* of *Rome*, and which we are particularly and remarkably distinguish'd from her by? Every Body may know, that will but acquaint themselves with the Declarations of our *Church*, and make a due Enquiry into Her Articles and Canons, that She asserts and maintains, " That the King's Majesty hath  
" the chief Power in the Realm of *England*,

" and



“ and other His Dominions; unto whom  
 “ the chief Government of all Estates of this  
 “ Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or  
 “ Civil, doth appertain;” as it is in Her  
 XXXVII<sup>th</sup> Article: And in Her II<sup>d</sup> Canon,  
 She asserts, “ That the King hath the same  
 “ Authority in Causes Ecclesiastical, that the  
 “ godly Kings had among the *Jews* and Chri-  
 “ stian Emperors in the Primitive Church.”  
 And here, I cannot but take Notice of what a  
 late Author very well observes, \* “ That  
 “ whoever will be at the Pains to compare the  
 “ *Rights* and *Powers* of the *Supremacy*, as attri-  
 “ buted to our Kings and Queens in the Sta-  
 “ tutes of K. *Henry VIII.* and Q. *Elizabeth*,  
 “ with the *Rights* and *Powers* of the *Supremacy*  
 “ of the Empire, as contain’d in the *Theodosian*  
 “ and *Justinian Codes*, and the *Justinian Novels*,  
 “ will find an exact Agreement and Harmony  
 “ between them, and tho’ not in the same nu-  
 “ merical Terms and Expressions; yet alto-  
 “ gether equivalent, and to all Intents and  
 “ Purposes the same.” Which, by the Way,  
 I think, a very full Answer to the Question  
 put to us by the Romanists, Where was your  
 Supremacy before King *Henry VIII.*? *viz.*  
 Where it always was, or ought to have been,  
 had not the Pope unlawfully usurp’d it.

BUT to make as short of this Matter as I

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can:

\* *The Independent Power of the Church, not Romish; but  
 Primitive and Catholic.*

can: The Clergy of the *Church of England*, are oblig'd by the LVth Canon, to own the King's Majesty to be Supreme Governor in these His Realms and Dominions, over all Persons, in all Causes, as well Ecclesiastical as Temporal. So that as faulty as the See and Court of *Rome* may be, and are, in this Particular; yet the *English Church* and *Clergy* do believe and maintain, That our blessed SAVIOUR by separating to Himself a Society and *Church* distinct from the World, did not thereby diminish or detract from the Powers of it; Sovereign Princes have all Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, but what is purely *Spiritual*, and an essential Part of the *Power* of the *Keys*. The Reason why we don't own, That they can make Canons or Ecclesiastical Constitutions is, because they can't prescribe or inforce them under any spiritual Punishment, such as Excommunication, Suspension or Degradation; but to affirm, That they cannot enact Laws and Constitutions, reform Errors and Heresies in the *Church*, remedy Encroachments and Innovations both in Faith and Discipline, especially with the Advice and Concurrence of the Bishops and Clergy, is contrary to the Sense and Practice of all Antiquity. The Preaching of God's Word, the Administration of the Sacraments, and the Binding and Loosing of Sinners, are Things so purely *Spiritual* that



that Kings in their own Persons can have nothing to do in them; yet they that have, are notwithstanding their Relation to CHRIST and His CHURCH, accountable to them; they are no less subject to the Higher, *i. e.* to the Civil Powers upon that Account; and are equally obnoxious, upon Neglect of Duty in their several Stations, to be punish'd by 'em: So that the utmost that is meant by the Independence of the *Church* upon the *State*, is, That the *Church* and *Ministry*, being at first founded and instituted by CHRIST, do not, (as is the Case of all Civil Officers) derive their Being and Original from the Secular Powers, and consequently, no Secular Power whatsoever, can with any Right, defeat or abolish those Powers of the *Church*, and the Officers of it, which Christ their Head hath invested them with; and yet that the Secular Powers are so far from suffering hereby, any the least Diminution of their Dignity and Authority, that the Object of both is rather increas'd and enlarg'd by it; in as much, as their Government extends to the Care and Inspection of those Things which were instituted and establish'd by the Dispensation of the Gospel, the Bishops and Clergy being no less Subjects to the KING or State, because of their Relation to CHRIST and His CHURCH.

THUS have I made appear, what I at first undertook

undertook to prove, namely, That the *Authority of the Church in Controversies of Faith*, is no more, when rightly understood, than what of Right belongs to Her; and that without it, She could not possibly subsist; That this Authority deprives no Man of his Right of *private Judgment*, or of the *Privilege of Thinking and Judging for himself*. And Lastly, That it is so far from being destructive of, or inconsistent with the *Authority of the Civil Magistrate*, that it really in some Measure advances and promotes it.

It is therefore now high time for me to relieve your Patience. Give me leave only in a word or two to caution you against two or three very dangerous sort of Men, the present Disturbers of our CHURCH and CONSTITUTION. The first are the modern *Arians* and *Freetinkers* of the Age, who as different as they may be, and are in some Things, yet unite in crying down the Power and Authority of the CHURCH and CLERGY; representing them as affecting an unreasonable Dominion over the Understandings and Minds of Men, and persecuting them for Conscience sake; who concur in asserting and vindicating the *Innocency of Error*, in advancing a boundless Liberty of Thinking and Believing in religious Matters just how much, and in what Manner they please; and provided they



they keep up to the open Profession and Practice of Morality, no Matter what Sett of Notions or Principles they maintain.

THE other sort of Men whom I would by all means entreat you to beware of, are the present *Eraſtians* and Libertines of the Age, who make all Religion a mere politick and human Invention, and under the Pretence of Popery, are for banishing Christianity out of the World; who really believe Nothing of that Article of our *Creed*, which eſtabliſhes the belief of the *Holy Catholick Church*, who are for extirpating the very Notion of any viſible Chriſtian Church independent on the State, or Will of Man; and who allow only thoſe to be true Friends to the State, who would make the *Church* a Tool and Creature of it: In ſhort, who are for blending Things Sacred and Civil together, and confounding what is temporal and earthly, what is eternal and heavenly; Men who are for bringing the World into the *Church*, and the *Church* into the World, expreſſly againſt the original Conſtitution of the Kingdom and Polity of CHRIST. Theſe are the falſe Prophets and Seducers, who ſpeak perverſe Things to draw Diſciples after them, whoſe Principles I have expoſ'd in the foregoing Diſcourſe: And therefore moſt earneſtly beſeech you, very carefully to avoid and to beware of them.

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them. And may we all *bold fast the Form of sound Words*; contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints: And not fondly imagine, that we may form to ourselves what Notions and Whims in Religion we please: but *let us all walk by the same Rule, and stand fast in One Spirit, with one Mind*: And, may the GOD of all Power and Might be a Defence to His CHURCH against all Her Adversaries, and establish Her upon the sure Foundations of Unity and Peace.

WHICH GOD of His Infinite Mercy grant, for the Sake of our Lord JESUS CHRIST; *To whom with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Power, Praise, Adoration and Thanksgiving, both now, and for evermore. Amen.*

F I N I S.





